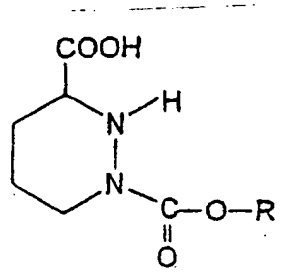
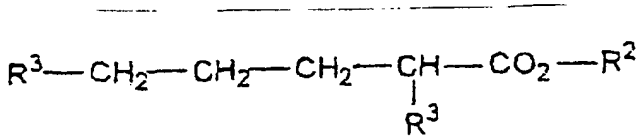
Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended) A process for preparing ~~the~~ a hexahydropyridazine-3-carboxylic acid ~~derivatives~~ derivative of the formula ~~(I)~~



I

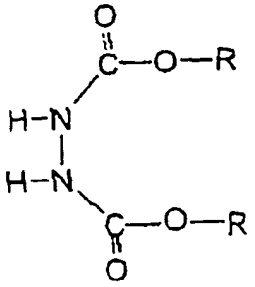
~~in which~~ wherein R ~~represents a~~ is selected from the group consisting of saturated or unsaturated, substituted or unsubstituted alkyl ~~radical~~, ~~a~~ substituted or unsubstituted aralkyl ~~radical or a~~ substituted or unsubstituted aryl ~~radical, characterized in that~~ comprising reacting a compound of the formula ~~(II)~~



II

~~in which~~ wherein R^2 ~~represents a~~ is substituted or unsubstituted alkyl ~~radical,~~ and R^3 ~~represents a~~ is halogen ~~atom~~ or a nucleofugal organic group,

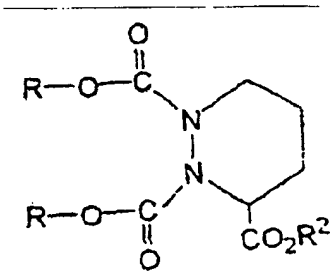
~~is reacted~~ with a compound of the formula ~~(III)~~



III

~~in which~~ whereas R has the above meaning,

in the presence of a base with a pK ~~of~~ greater than or equal to 8.5, in an organic ketone solvent ~~chosen from ketones,~~ to ~~the~~ a tetrahydro-1,2,3-pyridazine-tricarboxylate intermediate compound of the formula ~~(IV)~~



IV

~~in which~~ wherein R and R^2 have the above meanings, which is not isolated and which is treated with a basic aqueous medium, to obtain the hexahydropyridazine-3-carboxylic acid derivative of formula (I).

Claim 2 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein the organic ketone solvent is ~~chosen~~ selected from the group consisting of acetone, methyl ethyl

ketone, methyl isobutyl ketone, methyl tert-butyl ketone and diisopropyl ketone, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 3 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterized in that~~ of claim 1 wherein the base used in the first reaction is ~~chosen~~ selected from the group consisting of alkali metal carbonates and tertiary amines.

Claim 4 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ of claim 1 wherein the solvent is acetone.

Claim 5 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ of claim 1 wherein the base used in the first reaction is potassium carbonate.

Claim 6 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ of claim 1 wherein the base used for the second reaction is ~~chosen~~ selected from the group consisting of alkali metal hydroxides and alkali metal or alkaline-earth metal alkoxides.

Claim 7 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in the preceding claim characterized in that~~ of claim 6 wherein the alkali metal hydroxides are used in aqueous solution.

Claim 8 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in claim 6 or 7, characterized in that the mineral~~ of claim 6 wherein the base is sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide.

Claim 9 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ of claim 1 wherein, for the second reaction, the temperature is ~~between~~ 25°C ~~and~~ to 55°C and the volume of water is ~~between~~ 1 ~~and~~ to 10 liters per kilogram of compound of formula (III).

Claim 10 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in the preceding claim, characterized in that~~ of claim 9 wherein the reaction is performed by applying different successive temperature stages within the range.

Claim 11 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ of claim 1 wherein the compound of formula (I) is obtained in crystalline form by mixing the reaction medium with a solvent in which the compound of formula (I) is insoluble and which is a diluent for alcohols, and by ~~bringing~~ adjusting the pH of the medium to ~~a value of between~~ 0.5 ~~and~~ to 2 using an acid.

Claim 12 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in the preceding claim, characterized in that~~ of claim 11 wherein the solvent is ~~chosen~~ selected from the group consisting of aromatic hydrocarbons, aliphatic hydrocarbons, ethers and acetates.

Claim 13 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in claim 11 or 12, characterized in that~~ of claim 11 wherein the acid is hydrochloric acid.

Claim 14 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ of claim 1 wherein R^1 ~~represents the~~ is phenyl or naphthyl ~~radical~~, R^2 ~~represents a C_1 to C_4~~ alkyl ~~radical~~ of 1 to 4 carbon atoms and R^3 ~~represents a~~ is halogen ~~atom~~.

Claim 15 (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in the preceding claim, characterized in that~~ of claim 14, wherein R^1 ~~represents the~~ is phenyl ~~radical~~, R^2 ~~represents a~~ is methyl ~~radical~~ and R^3 ~~represents a~~ is bromine ~~atom~~.